

Message Text

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22

ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 PRS-01 H-02 SSM-05

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-02 SP-02 SS-15 OMB-01 SCCT-01 SY-05 NSCE-00 SSO-00

USIE-00 INRE-00 /097 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/P:OJONES:DP

APPROVED BY NEA/P:GFSHERMAN

S/PRS - MR. FUNSETH (INFO)

H - MR. FLATEN (INFO)

EUR/P - MR. JERABEK

IO/P - MR. BLACHLY

SSM - MR. MCANDREW

NEA/ARP - MR. DICKMAN

AF/P - MR. POPE

NEA - MS. GRIFFIN

----- 009435

O 042303Z AUG 76

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

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AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION USUN NY

USMISSION NATO
AMEMBASSY SANA
AMEMBASSY TUNIS
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
USMISSION SINAI
CINCEUR

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GENEVA FOR MEPC DEL, CINCEUR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING - AUGUST 4, 1976

FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS
FROM DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN'S PRESS BRIEFING FOR AUGUST 4,
1976:

Q. WHEN WAS OUR LAST CONTACT WITH THE PLO AND WHAT WAS
THE SUBJECT OF DISCUSSION, GENERALLY?

A. THE ANSWER IS: I DO NOT KNOW WHEN THE LAST CONTACT
WAS, BUT CERTAINLY IT WAS ON THE SUBJECT OF SECURITY FOR
OUR PEOPLE IN BEIRUT.

WE DO NOT KEEP A LOG OF THESE LOW-LEVEL CONTACTS. I THINK
WE HAVE GONE INTO SOME DETAIL ON HOW THOSE CONTACTS CAME
ABOUT AND THE NECESSITY FOR THEM AND THEIR UTILITY. AND
I CERTAINLY AM NOT GOING TO BE ABLE TO GIVE YOU A LOG OF
WHEN THE SECURITY OFFICER TALKED TO THE SERGEANT IN
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CHARGE.

Q. ARE THEY DISCUSSING ANYTHING BESIDES SECURITY WHEN
THEY DO GET TOGETHER?

A. NO. THEY ARE DISCUSSING THE SECURITY OF OUR PEOPLE AND
OUR MISSION IN BEIRUT.

Q. IS THE UNITED STATES PLAYING ANY ROLE IN THE EVACUATION
OF THE PALESTINIAN REFUGEE CAMP?

A. NO, WE ARE NOT. WE ARE NOT PLAYING ANY ROLE IN THAT
AT ALL.

Q. IS THE UNITED STATES PLAYING ANY ROLE IN THE REPORTED CONTACTS BETWEEN THE ISRAELIS AND THE LEBANESE ARAB ARMY?

A. I AM NOT AWARE OF --

Q. AT LEAST CBS REPORTED IT YESTERDAY, AND I DO NOT KNOW WHO ELSE IS REPORTING IT.

A. I AM NOT AWARE OF THESE REPORTS, SO I CANNOT OFFER ANY ENLIGHTENMENT AT ALL.

Q. THE CONTACTS WITH THE PLO WERE ONLY ABOUT SECURITY - NOTHING ELSE?

A. THAT IS CORRECT.

Q. AND SECURITY OF AMERICAN OFFICIALS IN BEIRUT NOT THE SECURITY OF ANYBODY ELSE?

A. WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY "ANYBODY ELSE?"

Q. WELL, THE REFUGEE CAMP, FOR EXAMPLE.

A. WHAT REFUGEE -- DO YOU MEAN TAL ZA'ATAR?

Q. YES.

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A. NO.

Q. AND WHEN YOU SAY "MISSION" YOU MEAN THE BUILDING, NOT THE --

A. YES, THAT IS WHAT WE CALL IT, YES. THE "AMERICAN MISSION" WITH A CAPITAL "M" -- AMERICAN MISSION, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE AMERICAN EMBASSY.

Q. NOT WHATEVER OUR TRANSCENDENTAL MISSION MAY BE OVER THERE.

A. YES, RIGHT.

A. HAS THERE EVER BEEN ANY CONTACT RECENTLY WITH THE CHRISTIAN ENCLAVE AS NORTH OF BEIRUT?

SPECIFICALLY WITH FRANJIYAH?

CHAMOUN?

A. I DO NOT KNOW.

Q. GEMAYEL?

A. I DO NOT KNOW.

Q. COULD YOU FIND OUT?

A. YES, I WILL --

Q. BY ANY A DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL? IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE --

A. I WILL LOOK INTO IT.

Q. -- BY SEA, FROM CYPRUS.

Q. CAN WE GO BACK TO THE PLO, PLEASE?

A. YES.

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Q. YOU MENTIONED THAT THE SECURITY OFFICER WAS IN CONTACT WITH A "SERGEANT." ARE WE TALKING ABOUT --

A. I AM USING THAT AS AN EXAMPLE.

I AM SAYING THAT WE CANNOT MAKE A LOG OF EVERY TIME A SECURITY OFFICIAL OF THE EMBASSY IS IN CONTACT WITH THE SECURITY PEOPLE IN THE AREA OF THE EMBASSY. WE SIMPLY DO NOT HAVE THAT. IT DOES NOT EXIST IN THIS BUILDING -- AND IT IS UP TO THE EMBASSY TO HANDLE SOMETHING LIKE THAT. IT IS DONE AT A VERY LOW LEVEL, AND I THINK WE HAVE GONE INTO SOME DETAIL AS TO THE NECESSITY FOR IT AND HOW IT HAS WORKED.

Q. YES, WELL, CAN YOU TELL US THE HIGHEST LEVEL WITHIN THE PLO OUR SECURITY OFFICER HAS BEEN IN CONTACT WITH?

A. I CANNOT TELL YOU THAT.

Q. YOU CAN'T TELL US?

A. NO.

Q. NOW CAN YOU TELL US WHAT OUR OFFICERS AT THE EMBASSY ARE DOING IN THE WAY OF TRYING TO BRING ABOUT A SETTLEMENT IN SYRIA? WHAT ARE WE DOING THERE?

A. IN SYRIA?

Q. IN LEBANON. WHAT ARE WE DOING THERE?

A. AS YOU KNOW, WE HAVE A CHARGE' THERE AT THE MOMENT. HIS NAME IS HUNT. HE, AS WAS HIS PREDECESSOR, IS IN CONTACT WITH THE VARIOUS PARTIES, AND I THINK WE HAVE GONE INTO THIS A NUMBER OF TIMES. WE ARE DOING WHAT IS POSSIBLE, WITHIN A VERY LIMITED CONTEXT, TO HELP FIND A SOLUTION. NOW THE DETAILS OF THAT, I AM SIMPLY NOT IN A POSITION TO GO INTO.

Q. BUT HE IS NOT IN CONTACT WITH THE PLO?

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A. I'M SORRY?

Q. HE IS IN CONTACT WITH "PARTIES" BUT ONE PARTY HE IS SURELY NOT IN CONTACT WITH IS THE PLO -- BECAUSE THAT IS WHAT THE SECURITY OFFICER HANDLES.

A. THE SECURITY OFFICER IS THE LEVEL AT WHICH OUR CONTACT IS CONTACT IS CONDUCTED.

Q. BUT --

A. ALL RIGHT, BUT WE ARE NOT GOING TO -- WE HAVE PUT OUT A LOT OF INFORMATION ON THIS. LET'S NOT GET INTO IT AGAIN AND GO AROUND AND AROUND.

Q. I DON'T WANT TO GET INTO THE PLO. I WANT TO GET INTO WHAT MR. HUNT, IN THIS CATALYTIC ROLE, IS DOING. AND AS A "CATALYST," WHICH YOU CALLED OUR MISSION IN BEIRUT, HE IS IN CONTACT WITH "PARTIES."

ARE YOU SAYING HE IS NOT IN CONTACT WITH THE PLO?

A. I AM SAYING HE IS IN CONTACT WITH THE LEBANESE PARTIES.

Q. IS HE IN CONTACT WITH THE PLO?

A. I AM NOT GOING TO GO INTO ANY MORE DISCUSSION ON THE QUESTION OF THE CONTACT OR THE DETAILS OF WHAT WE ARE DOING IN BEIRUT ON THIS.

Q. I WOULD LIKE TO ASK NOW, FOR THE RECORD, TODAY, AUGUST 4: WHO ARE THE PARTIES IN LEBANON? WHICH ARE THE PARTIES IN LEBANON WITH WHICH MR. HUNT OR OTHER OFFICERS -- OR MR. HUNT IS IN CONTACT WITH, IN TRYING TO REACH A SETTLEMENT?

A. I AM JUST NOT GOING TO GET INTO THE DETAILS OF MR. HUNT'S ACTIVITIES IN BEIRUT.

Q. I AM NOT TALKING ABOUT THAT.

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ALL WE WANT IS AN IDENTIFICATION OF THE PARTIES. NEVER
MIND THE ACTIVITIES. I AM NOT ASKING ABOUT THAT.

IS HE IN CONTACT WITH THE ARAB LEBANESE ARMY?

IS HE IN CONTACT WITH THE SYRIANS?

A. I DO NOT KNOW. I SIMPLY DON'T KNOW.

Q. I THINK YOU COULD SAVE YOURSELF A LOT OF GRIEF IF YOU
CAN SAY FLATLY, NOW, THAT MR. HUNT -- OR ANY OTHER
POLITICAL OFFICER -- IS NOT IN CONTACT WITH THE PLO.
BECAUSE I PRESUME THAT IS WHAT YOUR POSITION WILL BE.

A. I WILL STATE FLATLY THAT OUR COMMENTS ON THIS SUBJECT
WERE SET OUT IN SOME DETAIL IN A TEN-PART ANSWER TO
QUESTIONS RAISED ON THIS SUBJECT WHICH WAS POSTED AND
GIVEN TO YOU, IF I AM NOT MISTAKEN, ON MONDAY MORNING.

AND BEYOND THAT, I AM NOT GOING TO GO.

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<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 15 SEP 1999
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, LIBERATION FRONTS, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION, PRESS RELEASES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 04 AUG 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976STATE193367
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: NEA/P:OJONES:DP
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: n/a
Film Number: D760300-1321
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t197608103/baaaepqi.tel
Line Count: 300
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, TEXT ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN NEA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 6
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ellisoob
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21 JUL 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <21 JUL 2004 by hattaycs>; APPROVED <27 JUL 2004 by ellisoob>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING - AUGUST 4, 1976
TAGS: PFOR, LE, US, PLO
To: AMMAN
BEIRUT
DAMASCUS
CAIRO
TEL AVIV
JIDDA

ALGIERS
GENEVA
KUWAIT
DHAHRAN
JERUSALEM
KHARTOUM
MANAMA
TEHRAN
TRIPOLI
RABAT
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NATO
SANA
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DOHA
ABU DHABI
NOUAKCHOTT
MOGADISCIO
SINAI
CINCEUR
Type: TE

Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006